

## NEWSLEWER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



# LOESCH RECOGNIZED FOR HIS LEADERSHIP WITH THE VETERANS TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs posthumously honored Royce Loesch this week for his commitment to the veteran transportation program.

Loesch was instrumental in obtaining South Dakota's first VA Highly Rural Trans-

portation Grant for transporting veterans in Stanley County to their medical appointments. He continued to work in securing additional grants and was successful in securing grants for all counties in South Dakota that are considered highly rural.

Royce was a life member of the SD American Legion and served in various positions from the local level to the national Level. He dedicated his life to improving the lives of veterans.



Royce's wife Jeannine, his sons Jeff and Justin, his daughter-in-law Leanne and his grandson Wyatt accepted the award on behalf of Royce.

The Highly Rural Transportation Grants (HRTG) is a grant-based program that helps veterans in highly rural areas travel to VA or VA-authorized health care facilities. This program provides grant funding to veteran service organizations and state veterans service agencies to provide transportation services in eligible counties.

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Gov. Noem Message	2
VA Telehealth	3
SDNG Awards	4
DAV Fundraiser	5
Veterans Recovery Concert	5
Battleship SD	6
DAV Office Manager	6
VA Health Records	7
Change of Command	8
881st Leadership	9
Drop-In Legal Clinics	10
Drop-In Legal Clinics	11
BHSU Hero Night	12
AL Cornhole Classic	13
Davison County Health Fair	14
Patriot Poker Run	15
Uncoming Events	16

### A TRIBUTE TO OUR HEROES

President Harry Truman once said this: "Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service of our country can never be repaid. They have earned our undying gratitude. America will never forget their sacrifices."

Earlier this month, I was honored and humbled to join veterans and South Dakotans as we broke ground on South Dakota's first State Veterans Cemetery. Despite pouring rain, more than 100 veterans and South Dakotans gathered at the site just outside Sioux Falls for the momentous occasion.

South Dakota is home to more than 72,000 veterans who served their country and made incredible sacrifices for our freedom. Of these, 50,000 live on the eastern side of our state – hours away from the nearest veterans cemetery. This new site will ensure that veteran families on both sides of the state have the ability to bury their loved ones near their homes and communities.

This cemetery is about more than providing a peaceful resting place for our heroes. This cemetery is a tribute to patriots. It immortalizes the sacrifices that have been made for our freedoms. Even more than that, it's a way we can show the next generation that sacrifice does not go unnoticed.

One thing that was particularly special was that this was a project for veterans by veterans. Many of our South Dakota veterans spent over a decade working to bring a state veterans cemetery to South Dakota. It was their passion for this project that kept the momentum going and made the dream a reality.

Others played a part, too. The city of Sioux Falls gifted the state over 60 acres of land, and the federal Department of Veterans Affairs awarded us a \$6.9 million grant to get this project across the finish line.

I think it's incredibly special and symbolic that there were so many players to get us to the point where



we could break ground. Because we all must be committed to caring for our veterans. Saying thank you isn't just a city issue, or a state issue. Gratitude isn't something we can count on someone else to do. It's a personal responsibility that requires action from each one of

This cemetery is a token of our gratitude. It's how we'll remember and honor their stories and sacrifices forever.

To all those who have served and to the families who stand beside you, thank you. You are what makes this nation great.

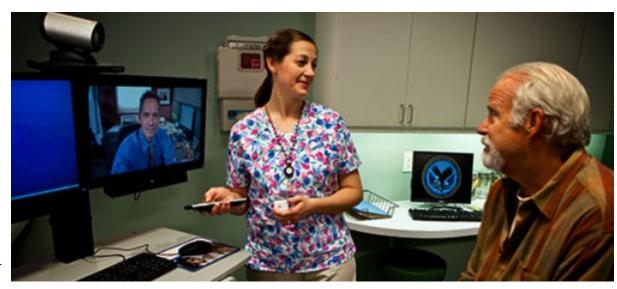


# VA DISTRIBUTED VIDEO TABLETS TO DELIVER TELEHEALTH TO VETERANS

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was recently recognized in studies by two independent peer-review journals — JAMIA Open and Psychiatric Services — for efforts to deliver trusted, easy access and high-quality online health care services to veterans with complex health care needs or residing in remote areas.

The department's tablet program is one part of VA's extensive telehealth program. The VA's use of technology to enhance care options for veterans is supported by the <u>VA MISSION Act</u>.

"Telehealth technology remains a vital platform to provide high-quality health care to all veterans, regardless of challenges they may face in accessing care," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie.



"VA's tablet program is a model that other networked health care systems across the country can mirror, and demonstrates the potential of telehealth capabilities in the years to come."

According to the <u>JAMIA Open study</u> published Aug. 5, VA's initiative to distribute video telehealth tablets to high-need patients appears to have successfully reached veterans with social and clinical access barriers, including Veterans in rural areas and patients with mental health conditions.

The study published by <u>Psychiatric Services</u>, Aug. 5, validates that the initiative also appears to improve access and continuity of mental health services of Veterans with mental health conditions. Furthermore, researchers discovered that the VA's efforts are improving clinical efficiency by decreasing missed opportunities for care.

Learn more about VA Telehealth Services.

## SD ARMY NATIONAL GUARD NAMES SOLDIER, NCO OF THE YEAR

The South Dakota Army National Guard selected four enlisted soldiers and six non-commissioned officers to compete in the state's Best Warrior Competition in Rapid City and Sturgis, Sept. 6-8, to identify the next Soldier and Non-commissioned Officer of the Year.

At the conclusion of the three-day competition, two individuals were named victors. Sgt. 1st Class Brian Voight, 109th Regional Support Group, was named the SDARNG's Non-commissioned Officer of the Year and Spc. Dominick Schoeberl, 235th Military Police Company, was named the SDARNG Soldier of the Year.

"The Best Warrior Competition is a phenomenal event," said Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick Couser, senior

enlisted leader for the South Dakota National Guard. "We have the best warriors from across the state competing against each other for two and a half days, with the best soldiers at the end prevailing."

The BWC challenges soldiers academically, mentally, physically and technically using multiple tasks focused on key areas.

"It was very demanding physically and as difficult as I thought it was going to be," said Voight. "But the guys I participated with were excellent and it was enjoyable overall."

The Army Combat Fitness Test is set to replace the Army Physi-

cal Fitness Test within the next year and the competitors experienced how challenging the new test will be.

"The soldiers are put in a position where they're up early and staying up late," said Couser. "It keeps them on their toes, makes them think and gets them sharp."

Voight and Schoeberl will advance to the Region 6 Best Warrior Competition, which is scheduled to be held in May 2020 in South Dakota. They will face competitors from Alaska, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming.

"I am excited to be able to further compete in regionals," said Schoeberl. "It is a chance to meet new people and grow in my training."

The competition and the training involved preparing for it provides the competitors not only with the opportunity to improve themselves, but also to improve their peers and subordinates as well.

"It gives me a better sense of a baseline of where soldiers should be in their training," said Voight. "I know I have not been training them [in some of these tasks] and I need to work on that."

Like any event, the organizers also learn and grow as they try to make the competition more challenging each year.

"There is always room for improvement," said Couser. "I encourage these Soldiers to let us know what went good and what went bad because we want to make this bigger and better for future events."



## DAY COUNTY COMMUNITIES SUPPORT DAY

Residents in the Webster area shined brightly during the DAV/ A&W Fundraiser.

The Webster A & W gave way 1,089 root beer floats and raised \$3,110 for the DAV.

They were second in the nation!

Kudos to Day County VSO Kevin Bohn for all his hard work on this project.





## 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BATTLESHIP SD MEMORIAL

SDDVA Deputy Secretary Aaron Pollard attended the 50th anniversary of the dedication of the Battleship South Dakota Memorial in Sioux Falls.

The memorial pays tribute to the Sailors and Marines who served in the South Pacific on board the USS South Dakota.

Senator Francis
Case and Congressman
Ben Reifel were instrumental in getting the
U.S. Navy to donate
components of the
USS South Dakota
when it was being sold



from scrap in 1962. Thus began the effort to build the memorial.

Numerous veterans that served in the South Pacific during World War II attended the dedication ceremony, as well as five crew members who were on the USS SD.

# DAV HIRES NEW OFFICE MANAGER

Marty Pennock is the new Office Manager for the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Arthur H. Muchow Chapter No. 1 and Department of South Dakota. Marty recently retired from the SD Game Fish and Parks, where he served as a conservation officer and supervisor. Marty has served in the U.S. Army since he enlisted in 1987 and has had four deployments to Iraq in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Inherent Resolve. Marty is currently a Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserves, where he serves as a Military Police Brigade Commander based in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

Marty can be reached at <a href="mailto:davsd@midconetwork.com">davsd@midconetwork.com</a> or (605)-332-6866.



# VA LAUNCHES NEW TRAINING PROGRAM FOR HEALTH RECORD SOLUTION

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently launched an innovative new training program to support its electronic health record modernization (EHRM) effort that, as of Sept. 12, had selected 76 trainees who have begun projects that address real-world VA health care challenges.

Leveraging the experiences of the Department of Defense's (DOD) current EHR rollout, the VA developed the <u>VA Innovative Technology Advancement Lab (VITAL)</u> training program, recognizing the importance of providing advanced training to selected end users who will support continuous performance improvement.

"The VA established VITAL to specially train staff who can identify possible challenges and work across the entire VA organization to make improvements," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "VITAL is an important component in our larger training strategy, which will help ensure efficient and timely user adoption of the modernized EHR system."

The new EHR solution will be the single source of veteran health information. Its advancements will allow users who solve a problem at one facility to share the solution with other facilities in near real-time. The VITAL program, a 12-18-month training series, develops both the technical and supporting change management skills necessary to drive greater efficiency and effectiveness in all aspects of veteran health care.

The VA identified key clinical and frontline staff who require advanced training to ensure smooth EHR modernization implementation, enhance functionality and support continuous performance improvement.

In May 2018, VA awarded Cerner Corp. a contract to replace the department's legacy patient record systems with the commercial-off-the-shelf solution currently being deployed by DOD. A single interoperable solution across VA and DOD will facilitate the secure transfer of active-duty service members' health data as they transition to Veteran status. This modernization effort will create a lifetime of seamless care for service members and veterans.

For more information about VA's Electronic Health Record Modernization program, visit www.ehrm.va.gov.



# 153RD ENGINEER BATTALION CHANGES COMMAND

Lt. Col. Jason Thomson, of Harrisburg, took command of the South Dakota Army National Guard's 153rd Engineer Battalion during a change of command ceremony at the Huron National Guard Armory, Sept. 7.

Thomson assumed command from Lt. Col. Dennis Bickett, who served in the position since February 2018.

As commander, Thomson is responsible for the command and control of about 840 soldiers in five units across South Dakota. The 153rd assists assigned units in meeting training, administrative and logistical requirements to maintain the unit's readiness in support of their state and federal missions.

"I'm excited about the future of the engineer organization with South Dakota," said Thomson. "The quality of soldiers and leaders that we have in this organization is second to none."

Thomson has over 23 years of service in the SDARNG. He first enlisted in December 1996 as a 12B combat engineer in Madison. In August 2002, he received his commission as a second lieutenant through the Officer Candidate School and assigned as an engineer officer.

Over the course of his career, Thomson has served in a variety of leadership and staff positions within the 153rd Engineer Battalion and 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, to include 153rd executive officer and S3 training and operations officer, and the 196th executive officer and personnel officer.

Thomson also served as commander for both Company C and Headquarters Company for the 153rd Eng. Bn. He is also a combat veteran deploying with Company C, 153rd, as a platoon leader in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom from December 2003 - February 2005.

On the civilian side, Thomson works as a full time federal technician for the SDARNG as the administrative



officer for the 196th MEB in Sioux Falls. Thomson holds a Bachelor of Science degree in economics from South Dakota State University and a Master of Science degree in strategic leadership from Black Hills State University.

Thomson is married to his wife, Shelly, and they have three children: Samantha, Abbigail and Sydney.



# 881ST HEADQUARTERS COMPANY WELCOMES NEW LEADERSHIP

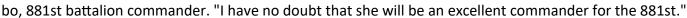
Capt. Julieanne Morse assumed command of the South Dakota Army National Guard's Headquarters and Headquarters Company for the 881st Troop Command during a ceremony at the Sturgis National Guard Armory, Sept. 8.

Morse, a native of Sioux Falls, assumed command from Capt. Jolene Kayser, who served in the position since April 2017.

As the HHC commander, Morse, will be responsible for all administrative, training and logistical requirements for more than 35 soldiers.

The 881st provides command and control and operational support for the battalion's more than 260 soldiers with 12 assigned units and detachments in Rapid City.

"Capt. Morse is extremely intelligent and I have high hopes for what she will accomplish," said Lt. Col. Dana Lim-



Morse began her career with the SDARNG in 2005, serving as a public affairs non-commissioned officer with the 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment. She deployed with the unit in 2013 and after returning, received her commission as a military intelligence officer.

She deployed again to Kuwait in 2016 with the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade for Operation Enduring Freedom, serving as the battle captain for Area Support Group - Kuwait. In 2018, she graduated from the Military Intelligence Captain's Career Course.

"First I want to thank God. I would not be able to accomplish anything without him being in my life," Morse said. "I also want to thank my friends and family who have helped me get here and finally, I want to thank Lt. Col. Limbo for giving me the opportunity and Capt. Kayser for her guidance the last couple of years."



# Free Drop-In Legal Clinic



### **JOIN US ON SEPTEMBER 20, 2019**

#### **HOT SPRINGS VETERAN'S HOSPITAL**

9am - 3pm

500 N 5th Street, Hot Springs, SD 57747

Assistance will be provided for military issues, tax issues, family law, criminal law, civil matters, etc.

Wills and trusts can be created and executed on site.

Join the Veterans' Legal Education Group and the University of South Dakota's Federal Tax Clinic for a FREE LEGAL CLINIC. Legal professionals, along with student attorneys, will be on site to address and support the military community and their families with any legal questions and needs.

FREE FOR ALL SERVICE MEMBERS, THEIR FAMILIES, AND VETERANS!

#### **EVENT CONTACT:**

Austin Schaefer VLEG Vice President (605) 380-0812 Austin.Schaefer@coyotes.usd.edu

#### **SUPPORTED BY:**

South Dakota Young Lawyers Section, University of South Dakota School of Law, the South Dakota State Bar, Military OneSource, and the South Dakota Veterans Affairs

# Free Drop-In Legal Clinic



### **JOIN US ON SEPTEMBER 21, 2019**

#### MITCHELL CORN PALACE

8am - 4pm

Veteran's Health Fair Event 604 N Main Street, Mitchell, SD 57301

Assistance will be provided for military issues, tax issues, family law, criminal law, civil matters, etc.

Wills and trusts can be created and executed on site.

Join the Veterans' Legal Education Group and the University of South Dakota's Federal Tax Clinic for a FREE LEGAL CLINIC. Legal professionals, along with student attorneys, will be on site to address and support the military community and their families with any legal questions and needs.

FREE FOR ALL SERVICE MEMBERS, THEIR FAMILIES, AND VETERANS!

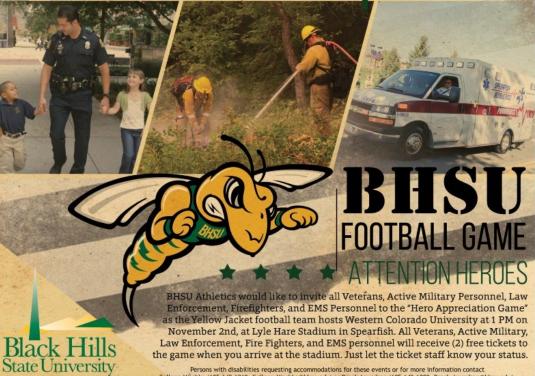
#### **EVENT CONTACT:**

Ashley Flood VLEG President (605) 658-3528 Ashley.Flood@coyotes.usd.edu

#### **SUPPORTED BY:**

South Dakota Young Lawyers Section, University of South Dakota School of Law, the South Dakota State Bar, Military OneSource, and the South Dakota Veterans Affairs





the game when you arrive at the stadium. Just let the ticket staff know your status. Persons with disabilities requesting accommodations for these events or for more information contact

Colleen Mischke (605-642-6269, Colleen.Mischke@bhsu.edu) or Brock Anundson (605-642-6882, Brock.Anundson@bhsu.edu)





# **Davison County Veterans Benefit & Wellness Day**

Saturday Sept 21st, 2019

**Davison County Veteran Services** 

Corn Palace, 604 North Main Street, Mitchell, SD 57301 8AM - 4:30PM



You can bring your DD214, VA Card, Current or Retired Military ID, or Veteran designation on your drivers license.

Veterans & Veteran families are welcome to visit with the VA Staff and organizations regarding benefits. We will also have services available for personal wellness.

Hair Stylists: Cass Zavadil and Julian Reif for free haircuts

Lane Logan Memorial-service dog provider Massages: New Leaf Body Spa - Olawa giving massages Vet Center . State Cemetery - Deputy Secretary Director Aaron Pollard

Dental Hygienist: Pat Aylward

Project 147 • SD Family Assistance Center Specialist Team Rubicon . Golf Carts - Midwest Electric Vehicels - Jeff Sands

Food provided by Coborns of Mitchell . Legal Services provided by USD Law Students and Staff American Legion Post 18 • VFW Post 2750 American Legion Auxiliary Post



#### PATRIOT POKER RUN & FREEDOM CONCERT

Saturday, Sept. 21, 2019 Red Rocks Bar & Grill Rowena, SD

facebook.com/RowenaRedRock

prairiepatriots.org

redemptionroadband.com

11:00 - 1:00 pm Patriot Poker Run Registration Red Rocks Bar & Grill

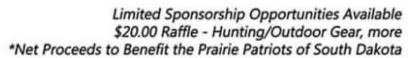
\$20 per hand. 50/50. Payout Top 3 Hands 50/30/20.

11:00-5:00 pm Patriot Poker Run Honoring Veterans

5:15 pm Live Entertainment Begins Red Rocks
5:30 pm Poker Hand Draw Closes Red Rocks

6:15-6:30 pm Poker Run/Raffle Draw Winners Red Rocks

6:30-8:30 pm Freedom Concert with Redemption Road Band Red Rocks



Registration & Concert Tickets Available on Eventbrite at prairiepatriotsfreedom.eventbrite.com

Registration: 11:00\*\*-1:00\*\*
\$20:00/Hand, 50/50, 50/30/20,
Red Rock Bar & Grill, Rosema, 50

Directions from Red Rock Bar & Grill to Red Rock Bar & Grill

O Ried Rock Bar & Grill
O Veterans Memorial

Centon Public Library, North Broadway Street, Canton, SD, USA

0

Veterana Memorial, 431 Wheelock Street, Hudeur, 50, USA

O Veterans Memorial

Sioux Center Public Library, 102 South Main Avenue, Sioux Center, IA, USA

0

Veterans of Foreign Wars, 111 Marshall Street, Rock Rapids, IA, USA

Red Rock Bar & Grill
 Lake a picture with a Frame
 Patriot member to complete run.

\*Suggested route to visit the four Veteran Memorials or Veteran Points of Interest is shown.

#### REMEMBER YOUR CELL PHONE OR DIGITAL CAMERAI

\*TAXE A SELFIE OF YOU AND YOUR MOTORCYCLE AT EACH STOP THAT INCLUDES THE VETERAN MEMORIAL/LOCATION IN THE BACKGROUND TO VERSY RUN COMPLETED! \*Net Proceeds to Benefit the Prairie Patriots of South Dakota prairiepatriots.org facebook.com/RowenaRedRock



In Annual

#### PATRIOT POKER RUN & FREEDOM CONCERT

Saturday, Sept. 21, 2019

Red Rock Bar & Grill Rowena, SD

#### Honoring our Veterans

prairiepatriotsfreedom.eventbrite.com

"And give thanks for your blessings, as you watch the eagle fly, And thank God for the heroes, it's through their blood, the eagle flies."

'The Eagle' by Redemption Road Band

- Sep 20—Veterans Stand Down—Sioux Falls (3601 S. Minnesota Avenue) 9:00 am—1:00 pm (CT)
- Sep 20—Sioux Falls POW/MIA Program—Sioux Falls Veterans Memorial Park (1021 W. Bailey Street) 6:30 pm (CT)
- Sep 20—Free Drop-In Legal Clinic—Hot Springs Veterans Hospital (500 N. 5th Street) 9:00 am—3:00 pm (MT)
- Sep 21—Free Drop-In Legal Clinic—Mitchell Corn Palace (604 N. Main Street) 8:00 am—4:00 pm (CT)
- Sep 21—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street) 9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)
- Sep 21—Davison County Veterans Wellness and Benefit Fair—Mitchell Corn Palace—8:00 am—4:30 pm (CT)
- Sep 21—EAFB Health and Wellness Expo—Rushmore Mall—Rapid City—9:00 am—Noon (MT)
- Sep 21-22—SD American Legion Golf Tournament—Hartford Golf Course
- Sep 24—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 5 Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena—8:45 pm (CT)—doors open at 7:15
- Sep 25—Veterans Commission Meeting—conference call
- Sep 28—Health Connect Fair—Sioux Falls Arena—11:00 am—3:00 pm (CT)
- Oct 10—Take Back the Night—Multicultural Center—Sioux Falls (515 N. Main Avenue) 5:30 pm—7:00 pm (CT)
- Oct 12—Mission VI Midwest Honor Flight Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center—9:00 pm (CT)
- Oct 14—State Offices Closed
- Oct 18—Expo for Her—Sioux Falls Arena—2:00—9:00 pm (CT)
- Oct 17—Trail Ridge Health and Wellness Fair—12:00—4:00 pm (CT)
- Nov 2—Second Annual Hangar Dance (Midwest Honor Flight Benefit)—Mid America Museum of Aviation—Sioux City, IA—7:00 pm (CT)
- Nov 2—BHSU Hero Appreciation Game— Lyle Hare Stadium—Spearfish—1:00 pm (MT)
- Nov 5—Veteran Stand Down and Resource Fair—Rapid City Rushmore Plaza Civic Center—10:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)
- Dec 3—Governor Noem's Budget Address
- Dec 9—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony—Flaming Fountain Veterans Memorial at Capitol Lake in Pierre—11:00 am (CT)

2020

- Jan 14—State of the State Address
- Jan 15—SD Veterans Council Legislative Reception
- Feb 21-23—American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Oacoma
- Mar 27-29—SD Vietnam and Era Veterans Reunion—Dakota Sioux Casino—Watertown
- Jun 18-21—American legion State Convention—Huron

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer

South Dakota Department of the Military <a href="http://military.sd.gov">http://military.sd.gov</a>

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <a href="http://vetaffairs.sd.gov">http://vetaffairs.sd.gov</a>

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